



# Michigan Counseling Association

## MCA Statement on HB 5040

The Michigan Counseling Association (MCA) is the organization that represents professional counselors who work with clients in public and private agencies, schools and colleges and private practice throughout the state of Michigan. MCA strongly opposes HB 5040 because of the extremely damaging effects that it will have on the university programs that train professional counselors, students who aspire to become counselors, and members of the public who need counseling services.

If HB 5040 is enacted, the public and private Michigan universities (EMU, WMU, Wayne, Oakland, University of Detroit Mercy, Andrews) that are accredited by CACREP (Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Educational Programs) risk losing their accreditation. The expectation that counseling students *behave* in accordance with the ACA Code of Ethics is a curricular requirement for any program that seeks CACREP accreditation; this requirement is reflected in the following CACREP standards:

Standard I.P states the following:

The program faculty conducts a systematic developmental assessment of each student's progress throughout the program, including consideration of the student's academic performance, professional development, and personal development. Consistent with established institutional due process policy and the American Counseling Association's (ACA) code of ethics and other relevant codes of ethics and standards of practice, if evaluations indicate that a student is not appropriate for the program, faculty members help facilitate the student's transition out of the program and, if possible, into a more appropriate area of study.

The intent of this standard, according to a guiding statement issued by CACREP (<http://www.cacrep.org/template/page.cfm?id=125>), is that programs adopt and adhere to the current American Counseling Association's (ACA) Code of Ethics. The counseling program(s) must provide the knowledge and skills that enable students to fully comply with the ACA Code of Ethics, including:

### C.5. Nondiscrimination

Counselors do not condone or engage in discrimination based on age, culture, disability, ethnicity, race, religion/ spirituality, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status/ partnership, language preference, socioeconomic status, or any basis proscribed by law. Counselors do not discriminate against clients, students, employees, supervisees, or research participants in a manner that has a negative impact on these persons.

**F.8.a. Standards for Students**

Counselors-in-training have a responsibility to understand and follow the ACA Code of Ethics and adhere to applicable laws, regulatory policies, and rules and policies governing professional staff behavior at the agency or placement setting. Students have the same obligation to clients as those required of professional counselors.

The guiding statement continues, “ Therefore, if a student engages in behavior that is discriminatory pursuant to ACA Codes C.5. and F.8.a., it could be grounds for determining that the student is unable or unwilling to develop the knowledge and skills required by the program which could be the basis for remediation and/or dismissal from the program.”

If enacted, HB 5040 will require that counseling programs allow students to refuse to see clients based on the client’s race, sex, or national origin, among other protected traits, thus violating Standard C.5 of the ACA Code of Ethics. CACREP has made it clear that in violating the Code of Ethics, every CACREP-accredited program violates essential training standards and seriously jeopardizes their accredited status. The Michigan Counseling Association urges you to defeat this bill so that the counseling profession can maintain the highest ethical standards for the training of professional counselors.

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